



Edward Snowden nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

By: Ashe Schow – July 15, 2013

Edward Snowden, the National Security Agency whistleblower who revealed the agency's data collection program, has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

"Edward Snowden has — in a heroic effort at great personal cost— revealed the existence and extent of the surveillance, the U.S. government devotes electronic communications worldwide," read the nomination. "By putting light on this monitoring program — conducted in contravention of national laws and international agreements — Edward Snowden has helped to make the world a little bit better and safer."

Swedish sociology professor Stefan Svallfors sent the nomination to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, but because of the timing, Snowden would not be eligible for the 2013 prize but could be considered for the award in 2014. Social science professors count as "qualified" people whose nominations hold weight.

"The decision to award the 2013 prize to Edward Snowden would — in addition to being well justified in itself — also help to save the Nobel Peace Prize from the disrepute that incurred by the hasty and ill-conceived decision to award U.S. President Barack Obama (the) 2009 award," Svallfors wrote to the committee.

There are those in the U.S. who do not believe Snowden deserves the award, however. Steven Bucci, director of foreign policy at the Heritage Foundation, said, "This is as absurd as if someone nominated spies Aldrich Ames or Robert Hanssen for a Nobel Peace Prize. It seems now that a major qualification for this award is to do something as detrimental to the interests of the United States as possible. Snowden is a thief and a betrayer of trust; does that really contribute to peace?"

Gene Healy, vice president of libertarian think tank Cato Institute (and a *Washington Examiner* columnist), added that, "Well, the Committee has already given the Prize (in 2009) to Drone-fleet Commander President Barack Obama, so I suppose anything is possible," but said that he was not interested "in efforts to either lionize or demonize Edward Snowden."

"All the focus on 'the content of his character' is a distraction," Healy said. "To take a couple of historical examples, it didn't really matter whether Daniel Ellsberg or Mark 'Deep Throat' Felt were heroes, villains, or something in between — what mattered were the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate cover-up. What matters here are the massive NSA data-collection programs that the executive branch has been lying to the public to conceal, and that's where the focus should be."